



STORM WATER PERMITTING

THE "OTHER" POINT SOURCE PROGRAM

What is Storm Water Runoff?

Storm water runoff is water generated from precipitation (rain, snow or ice melt). This water seeps into the ground or it drains into storm sewers. Storm water that does not seep into the ground drains through ditches and/or underground pipes before being released into lakes, streams, wetlands, or coastal waters.



Why is Storm Water a Concern?



A stream rich with sediment from a nearby construction site.

Storm water discharges from storm sewers in urbanized areas are a concern because of their potential to impact nearby streams and lakes. Concentrated development in urbanized areas substantially increases impervious surfaces, such as city streets, drive-ways, and parking lots on which pollutants from concentrated human activities

settle and remain until a storm event washes them into nearby storm drains. Common pollutants include pesticides, nutrients from fertilizer, oils, litter, sediment, heavy metals and oxygen-depleting matter. Another concern is the possible illicit connections of sanitary sewers, which can result in coliform bacteria and other pathogens entering the storm sewer. Storm water runoff picks up and transports these pollutants and then discharges them, untreated, to waterways via storm sewer systems. When left uncontrolled, these discharges can result in fish kills, the destruction of spawning and wildlife habitats, a loss in aesthetic value, and contamination of drinking water supplies and recreational waterways that can threaten public health. Activities at industrial facilities and construction sites can also have a large impact on the quality of storm water being discharged into local water bodies. Storm water runoff from industrial facilities can carry pollutants like oil and grease or toxic substances into storm sewers and ultimately into local rivers and lakes. Runoff from construction sites, cleared of existing vegetation, can lead to increased runoff rates, sedimentation, and the transport of heavy metals from construction equipment. EPA focuses on improving water quality by regulating storm water discharges from urbanized areas and industrial activities.

EPA's Role in Regulating Storm Water Runoff

EPA issued Phase I regulations which require NPDES point source permit coverage for storm water discharges from: (1) "medium" and "large" Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) generally serving populations of 100,000 or greater; (2) construction activity disturbing 5 or more acres of land; and (3) ten categories of industrial activity. The Phase II storm water regulations were published final in December 1999 and require NPDES permit coverage for construction activities that disturb 1 to 5 acres and *regulated* small MS4s. Regulated small MS4s generally include all MS4s within urbanized areas (i.e., as defined by the Census Bureau), and MS4s outside urbanized areas with populations greater than 10,000.



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Storm Water Permits

Storm water permits address the potential affects of storm water runoff and describe the necessary actions the operator must take to minimize pollutant discharges into waters of the United States. The permit requirements include implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize or filter runoff, operator initiated inspections, and analytical monitoring for some industrial sectors. For industrial storm water permits, a document referred to as a **Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)** needs to be developed by the site operator prior to obtaining permit coverage. The SWPPP describes the controls that the operator will implement to minimize storm water impacts to local water bodies. Typically controls are low-cost, low-technology, and are targeted at reducing runoff rates and minimizing storm water contact with pollutants. MS4 permits require implementation of a comprehensive storm water management program that addresses six program topics: (1) public education and outreach; (2) public participation/involvement; (3) illicit discharge detection and elimination; (4) construction site runoff control; (5) post-construction runoff control; and (6) pollution prevention/ good housekeeping.

Region 8 NPDES Permitting Authority

EPA has issued general permits for industrial storm water discharges where EPA is the NPDES permitting authority. Within EPA Region 8, EPA retains NPDES permitting authority for the Federal Facilities in Colorado and for Indian Country Lands in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

What are Some of the Current Issues?

Applications from small construction and small MS4s are due to States and EPA by March 10, 2003. States and EPA are working to notify affected companies and municipalities, and are getting permits and databases in place to handle this workload. Within Region 8, approximately 160 municipalities and hundreds of small construction projects will be required to obtain permit coverage for the first time. Within Region 8, approximately 160 municipalities and hundreds of small construction projects will be required to obtain permit coverage for the first time. States and EPA are working to:



The Phase II Rule will affect many communities as rapid growth and urban sprawl continue to occur throughout the Rocky Mountain West.

- notify affected municipal and non-municipal MS4s within urbanized areas
- designate municipal MS4s in non-urbanized areas
- issue construction general permits to cover small construction projects
- issue MS4 general permits to cover discharges from regulated municipal and non-municipal MS4s
- update and expand databases to track this new group of permittees

For more information on storm water go to <http://www.epa.gov/region8/water/stormwater/stormwater.html> or contact Vern Berry at (303) 312-6234 or Greg Davis at (303) 312-6082.